

# Search of Church Materials Upheld

Judge Refuses to Prohibit Customs  
Agents From Inspecting Documents

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Expressing concern for massive searches by U.S. Customs officials of documents sent to Los Angeles from the Church of Scientology's London offices, a federal judge Monday nevertheless refused to enjoin Customs agents from making further such searches in the future.

U.S. Dist. Judge William P. Gray said there appeared to be no question that Customs agents have the right to inspect anything that enters the country.

Customs officials, under the authority to seize material that is either obscene or seditious, detained four boxes of church files over the July 4 holiday after an agent scanning some of the material saw the words "Interpol," "CIA," "FBI" and "debugging," Asst. U.S. Atty. James R. Dooley told the court.

Most of the material was returned after the three-day holiday and Customs officials determined there was no justification for detaining it further, he added.

But Dooley told Gray the government wanted to keep copies of a small but unspecified number of other documents that might be used for undisclosed criminal investigations and for preparation of a defense to the church's civil suit over the seized documents.

Scientology officials, however, claim that 172 items sent from the international headquarters in London are missing from what was returned by Customs.

Church attorney Peter Young challenged the assertion that any of the material copied and kept by the government has anything to do with criminal violations and he charged that the Customs seizure was a part of an overall effort by federal authorities to harass the controversial church.

"If the Pope sent over a box (of documents) from the Vatican I doubt you'd go through it with a fine tooth comb as was done here," Gray said.